

Judiciary Committee

IN OPPOSITION TO HB 6889: AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE MATTERS

March 15, 2023

Dear Chairs Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, and members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Amber McPhaul and I am an ally of the [Connecticut Justice Alliance](#) (CTJA).

I'm writing this testimony to communicate my strong opposition to bill HB 6889: An act concerning juvenile matters. I am writing this testimony to communicate my strong opposition to HB 6669: An Act Concerning Juvenile Matters. **This bill is harmful to young people, families, and communities.** None of the provisions in this bill have a positive impact on public safety. Read the Connecticut Justice Alliance Fact sheet about sending children to adult prison. Sending children to adult prison is traumatic, ineffective, and expensive. I am opposed to any language that unjustly increases transfer to adult court. Many sections of this bill assume that the child's family is the problem. Instead of offering resources and support for families, this bill proposes holding a child if the parent is "unable to control" them- this is **UNCONSTITUTIONAL** and offensive. In terms of reinstating the Family with Service Needs petitions, this process causes a child to have unnecessary interaction with the legal system. Children are already being offered diversionary programs in Connecticut. Children shouldn't have to go to court to get services to meet their needs. Connecticut has a whole menu of behavioral health services and community programs for children who are experiencing behaviors in this category. This will ultimately **delay** children's access to services and harm their trust in "the system". Allowing courts to investigate a family when a child has been charged with a certain offense will have a disproportionate impact on communities that are already over-policed and over-surveilled. Numerous mandated reporters exist in the realm of young people that they will come into contact with. Those people can make referrals to the Department of Children and Families if abuse or neglect is suspected. Connecticut legislators must focus on investing resources in families and communities, instead of incarcerating them. I urge the Judiciary Committee to oppose HB 6889.

Thank you for taking the time to review my written testimony.

Amber McPhaul